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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

July 19, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TED POE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address bills pending or already signed into law in 47 States that will disenfranchise voters. These bills will prohibit address changes at the polls, end volunteer-run voter registration drives, eliminate same-day voter registration, and limit the ability of absentee voters to cast their ballot. Many of the bills include highly restrictive voter photo identification requirements.

Just this month, Mr. Speaker, the Ohio State Legislature passed and Gov-

ernor Kasich signed into law one of the most draconian voter measures in the Nation. Ohio's House bill 194 invalidates a vote where a voter properly marks the ballot in support of a particular candidate but also writes in the name of that same candidate. These bills dramatically reduce the time allotted for early voting and eliminate the requirement that poll workers direct voters to the correct precinct. These new policies are a clear attempt to prevent certain predetermined segments of the population from exercising their right to vote.

To be frank, Mr. Speaker, these efforts have an all too familiar stench of the Jim Crow era. The bill pending in my State and all the others are the works of covert opportunists seeking to disenfranchise and suppress the rights of American citizens. I'm here today to tell you that we will not relinquish our constitutional rights, and we plan to fight to uphold the franchise others fought and died to protect. We will not lie down.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from North Carolina, Mr. G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, across the country, Republican-led legislatures are pushing and passing laws that will suppress minority and elderly voters in the coming election. Under the guise of "eliminating voter fraud," Republicans have a solution to a problem that simply does not exist. In my home State of North Carolina, where the Republican legislature is attempting to require voter ID at the polls, there were only 44 cases of voter fraud in the 2008 and 2010 elections combined. Forty-four cases out of over 7 million ballots cast. Is this a serious voter problem? No.

Unfortunately, it is a cynical and malicious Republican attempt to suppress minority and elderly voters who turned out in historical numbers for

the 2008 elections. Almost one-fourth of African American voting age citizens and one-fifth of seniors do not have government-issued ID; yet new laws require them to pay for IDs in order to vote. This is a poll tax. We must inform our constituents that their fundamental right in a democracy is being infringed and fight back against this voter suppression epidemic.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to my good friend, the Congresswoman from Florida, CORRINE BROWN.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. All across the country we are witnessing efforts to suppress minority voting rights. How is this being done? By deterring minority voters from registering to vote and from going to the polls in an organized effort to turn the clock back to the period prior to the 1965 Voting Rights Act. I am from Florida, and in my State, our current Governor, Rick Scott, is doing everything he can to follow in the steps of what has occurred across the country, striving to stamp out the gains we worked so hard for so many, many years to achieve.

In Florida, earlier this year, Governor Scott signed the Omnibus Elections bill, which takes away many of Florida voters' basic rights. Its provisions include numerous hideous items much like those in bills passed in other State legislatures around the Nation to keep African Americans and Hispanics from going to the polls or refraining from participating in early voting in the upcoming 2012 elections.

The new law passed in Florida would make voting more difficult for people who have recently changed residence as well as shorten early voting time, from 14 days to 6 days. It would provide a 100-foot buffer between voters standing in line to get information. And it goes on and on and on. In addition, it imposes a \$50 fine on election supervisors who are late in filing routine reports to the State.

After what happened in Florida in the 2000 coup d'etat, it is amazing to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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me that Florida would pass such hideous laws. I think it's very important that the Justice Department weigh in and that the people in Florida are not disenfranchised.

THE NATIONAL DEBT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation's debt now approaches its current \$14.29 trillion limit, many Americans rightfully ask: How did this happen?

In the past decade alone, Congress has authorized an increase in the debt 10 times. When Republicans had controlled the White House and Congress, it was Republicans who voted for it. When Democrats have controlled the White House and Congress, it has been Democrats who have voted for it.

The Federal Government has only managed to balance its budget five times in the last 50 years, most recently with President Clinton, a Democrat, and Republican control in the House of Representatives. Washington now borrows approximately 40 percent of every dollar it spends. Foreign investors hold half of our Nation's \$14 trillion debt—not only from China, but from Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and other places as well. Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called the national debt “the single biggest threat to our national security.”

For the first time in modern history, last year's Congress passed no budget, no fundamental blueprint for spending, and no final decision on spending levels through the appropriations process for the entire fiscal year. We've been operating under a series of continuing resolutions, which has led to uncertainty as to Federal levels of spending and as to tax rates, which in turn has led to a lack of hiring in the private sector, with an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent, which in turn has led to less revenues in Federal coffers—a vicious cycle that cannot continue.

Any agreement to President Obama's request to increase our borrowing limit should include a real plan to bring our fiscal house in order and reduce the Nation's unsustainably high levels of Federal spending, debt and deficits. This should include substantial reductions in current spending—at least \$100 billion in fiscal year 2012—limiting Federal expenditures to a certain percentage of gross domestic product.

The historic norm has been 20 percent over the last generation. Tragically, we're now at 24 percent—and safeguards that will restrict future spending, such as a balanced budget amendment, which is contained in 49 of our 50 States.

Also, we must put partisanship aside and include reforms to save Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. If we do nothing, for example, regarding Medicare—and the President's budget

in the winter did nothing—the program will begin to go bankrupt in 2024, 13 years from now. That is simply unsustainable and unacceptable.

When I was a boy and a young man, the fundamental issue confronting the Nation was the threat of the Soviet Union and international communism, the focus of evil in the modern world, as President Reagan said.

□ 1010

The fundamental issue confronting the Nation in the 21st century is fiscal responsibility. Will our children live in a diminished America? Will the promise of America that each generation will do better than the generation before it continue to exist? Will we continue to lead the world or will leadership pass to China or India or to some other place?

This is the great issue confronting the people of the United States, and it is the great issue confronting us here in Congress as well. Let's get our fiscal house in order.

THE REAGAN MYTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, an American President once wrote a letter to the Senate majority leader, urging him to raise the debt ceiling.

The President wrote: “The full consequences of a default or even the serious prospect of default by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate.

“Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and on the value of the dollar in exchange markets.”

That President's name was Ronald Reagan, and the year was 1983.

He closes his letter to Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker, saying: “The risks, the costs, the disruptions, and the incalculable damage lead me to but one conclusion: The Senate must pass this legislation before the Congress adjourns.”

Watching the House floor 28 years later, you could be forgiven for being surprised Reagan would ever say such a thing. That's because the Reagan who gets referenced on the floor here is a myth while the Reagan who wrote to Howard Baker urging pragmatism was a man.

The real Ronald Reagan once said: “All of us have grown up accepting, with little question, certain images as accurate portraits of public figures—some living, some dead. Seldom, if ever, do we ask if the images are true to the original.”

In the year of his 100th birthday, the Great Communicator might be amazed at how far his own image has shifted from the original.

He'd see his most dedicated followers using his name as justification for saying “no” to honoring our debts. He'd

see his legacy used to play chicken with the world's greatest economic engine; but as Reagan often quoted John Adams, “facts are stubborn things.”

The facts are these: President Reagan raised the debt ceiling 18 times. He recognized the danger of economic brinkmanship. President Reagan took responsibility when the deep tax cuts of 1981 didn't produce the promised revenue. He worked with both sides of the aisle to find a more sustainable balance. He worked with Tip O'Neill to shore up Social Security. He worked with my predecessor Dan Rostenkowski to reform the Tax Code and eliminate tax loopholes.

All of these actions would be condemned as tax increases by the purists who follow the image instead of the man. Image worship is a bipartisan disease, but we all do ourselves and our Nation a disservice by distorting past images to justify present policies.

As another American President, John F. Kennedy, once put it: “The greatest enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.”

To say I disagreed with President Reagan on a number of issues is an understatement, but the more I get to know the myth, the more I like the man. President Reagan was not a picture on the wall. He was President of the United States for two terms in office, and he did his best to fulfill his sworn obligations.

We in Congress would do well to follow his lead and focus on what we can do during our short time in office. Let's truly follow President Reagan's example and govern for the future, not a past that never existed. Instead of talking to portraits, let's talk to each other.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I am once again on the floor of the House with a picture of children who have lost a loved one in Afghanistan. Eden and Stephanie Balduf, shown here at Arlington Cemetery, lost their father, Sergeant Kevin Balduf, on May 12 of this year.

Sergeant Balduf, who was stationed at Camp Lejeune Marine Base, and Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Palmer, stationed at Cherry Point Marine Base, were sent with the mission to train Afghan citizens to become police. The men had just sat down to dinner when a rogue trainee opened fire, killing both men.

In an e-mail to his wife the day before he died, Sergeant Balduf said: “I don't trust them. I don't trust them for anything, not for anything at all.”

This brings me to a quote from AC Snow's recent column in the Raleigh News and Observer, titled, “Time to